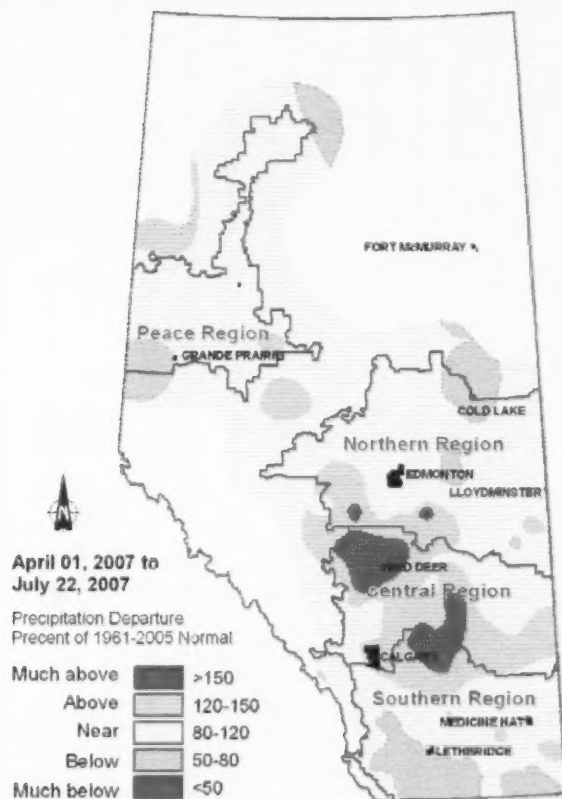


## Crop Conditions as of July 24, 2007

While the heat wave in Alberta was needed for advancing the development of this spring's late crops, it is quickly threatening already lowered yield expectations. In general, crop development is still a week behind normal as seeding and emergence have varied considerably across the province. Spring cereals range from the first awns being visible to the end of flowering. Fall cereals range from flowering completed to early dough stage. Canola stages range from 65% flowering to 32% podding, and dry peas are at 58% flowering to 41% podding.

Despite the late start and excessive heat, the majority of crops across the province are mostly in good condition. Provincially, spring wheat and durum are rated as 4% poor, 22% fair, 62% good and 12% excellent. Barley has a similar rating, but there are many areas reporting fields turning white from heat stress. Better than 85% of fall-seeded cereals are still reported as being in good to excellent condition. The heat has affected canola and peas the hardest, with all areas reporting high levels of flower blast and pod abortion. Canola is reported as 6% poor, 24% fair, 58% good and 12% excellent. Dry peas are reported as 3% poor, 19% fair, 64% good and 14% excellent. Specialty crops such as potatoes, sugar beets and dry beans are all reporting over 75% good condition, with lower insect and disease pressure.

Rain has been very sporadic over most of the province, bringing various amounts of precipitation and damaging hailstorms. Surface soil moisture is rated as 14% poor, 25% fair, 44% good, 11% excellent and 6% excessive, while sub-surface moisture is reported as 6% poor, 22% fair, 51% good, 17% excellent and 4% excessive. Rain is needed in all areas of the province for crops to survive the high temperatures and fill out properly. Hail has caused light to severe crop damage across Alberta; canola is not recovering from hail damage as well as some of the other crops.



Program.

First cut hay is almost 70% complete. High humidity and yields have affected curing in some areas, but most are reporting good to excellent conditions and quality. High temperatures have significantly slowed down pasture growth and have caused some pastures to die down a few weeks ahead of normal. Provincially, pastures are rated as 6% poor, 26% fair, 54% good and 14% excellent. Tame hay is rated as 4% poor, 19% fair, 59% good and 18% excellent.

Grasshoppers and gophers are still the most troublesome pests with reports of crop damage mostly on cereals. Other reported pests include, cabbage seedpod weevil, diamondback moths, wheat midge, root maggots, wireworm and lygus bugs; some areas are also reporting high counts for Bertha armyworm moths. Some fungicides have been applied, but disease pressure has been lower than expected due to the lack of moisture, high heat and wind.

*Our thanks to Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen, staff of AFSC and the Alberta Ag-Info Centre for their partnership and contribution to the Alberta Crop Reporting*

## **REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS:**

*The 2007 Alberta Crop Report Series continues to provide summaries for the following five regions:*

### **Region One: Southern (Strathmore, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Foremost)**

- Crop and moisture conditions varied across the region, with some fields deteriorating due to the hot, dry, windy weather. Normal yields are expected for early seeded crops, while below average yields are expected for late seeded and hail damaged crops. Canola and pulse crops are experiencing flower blast, and some cereal crops are being salvaged for feed. This hot weather is ideal for irrigated crops with good water management and major and specialty crops are advancing rapidly.
- Rain is still needed to fill out the crops. Overall, surface soil moisture is rated as 35% poor, 29% fair, 32% good and 4% excellent. Sub-surface moisture is reported as 24% poor, 34% fair, 36% good and 6% excellent.
- An estimated 150,000 acres have been sprayed for cabbage seedpod weevil, even though insect and disease pressure is down because of the hot, dry weather.
- First-cut haying is complete. Ideal haying conditions, good tonnage and quality were reported. Second-cut expectations are low as pastures and tame hay fields are dying down a few weeks ahead of normal.

### **Region Two: Central (Rimbey, Airdrie, Coronation, Oyen)**

- Crop and moisture conditions varied across the region. Yield expectations remain below normal due to the late wet spring and recent excessive heat and hail damage. Stressed crops are expected to deteriorate quickly if the high temperatures continue into August.
- Scattered storms brought heavy rains and hail, causing up to 100% damage in some areas. Overall, surface soil moisture is rated as 5% poor, 14% fair, 46% good, 16% excellent and 19% excessive, while sub-surface moisture is 10% fair, 53% good, 19% excellent and 18% excessive.
- Crops are now rated as mostly good, which is an improvement over the previous crop report.
- Haying is over 50% complete. Forages are yielding above normal, but quality is down slightly due to the high humidity and scattered showers.

### **Region Three: North East (Smoky Lake, Vermilion, Camrose, Provost)**

- The majority of crops are in good condition, but surviving on sub-surface moisture. Some areas are reported as very dry and have had to salvage crops. Rain is still needed for crops to fill out and achieve normal yield potential. Also, light sandy and heavy gumbo soils are starting to show the effects of heat stress.
- Some areas have experienced heavy hail damage and a few fields are not recovering well. Overall, surface moisture is rated as 16% poor, 30% fair, 50% good and 4% excellent. Sub-surface moisture is reported as 2% poor, 33% fair, 58% good and 7% excellent.
- There are some reports of spraying for wheat midge damage and grasshoppers.
- Haying is progressing normally, with over 60% complete; conditions, yields and quality are reported as good to excellent. Pastures are drying out and growth has slowed down significantly.

### **Region Four: North West (Barrhead, Edmonton, Leduc, Drayton Valley, Athabasca)**

- Crops are mostly in good to excellent condition with the hot weather advancing crop development, which is still estimated at 1-2 weeks behind normal. Also, moisture is needed to reach normal yield potential.
- Hailstorms have caused crop damage in some areas. Surface moisture is rated as 9% poor, 30% fair, 48% good and 13% excellent. Sub-surface moisture is rated as 4% poor, 29% fair, 52% good and 15% excellent.
- There have been some reports of grasshopper damage to cereal crops and very few reports of diseases, even with the high humidity. As a precaution, some canola fields have been sprayed for sclerotinia.
- Haying is about 70% complete, with good to excellent yields and quality reported.

### **Region Five: Peace River (Fairview, Falher, Grande Prairie, Valleyview)**

- Extreme heat is helping to advance crop development, but causing significant flower blast in canola. Canola yields are expected to be below average while normal yields are expected for cereal crops. There are some reports of crops being salvaged for feed.
- Showers have been scattered across the Peace region leaving some areas very dry. All areas need rain to cope with the high temperatures. Moderate to severe hail was reported near Peace River and Manning. Overall, surface moisture is rated as 4% poor, 26% fair, 45% good, 15% excellent and 10% excessive; sub-surface moisture is 1% poor, 5% fair, 55% good, 38% excellent and 1% excessive.
- Grasshoppers are reported in some areas, ranging from moderate to severe infestations.
- Haying is over 60% complete, with good to excellent conditions, yields and quality reported. Pastures are drying out and growth has slowed down due to the hot weather.

**Alberta Agriculture and Food  
Economics Unit  
July 24, 2007**

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